

THE VANITY OF
PHILOSOPHICK SYSTEMS.

A

P O E M.

ADDRESSED TO THE
ROYAL SOCIETY.

——— Artem experientia fecit,
Exemplo monstrante viam, speculataque longé
Deprendit———

——— totum eternâ mundum ratione moveri. MANILIUS.

Natura, inquis, hæc mihi præstat. Non intelligis, te, cum hoc dicis,
mutare nomen Deo? Quid enim aliud est Natura quam Deus, et divina
ratio toti mundo, et partibus ejus inserta? SENECA.

L O N D O N:

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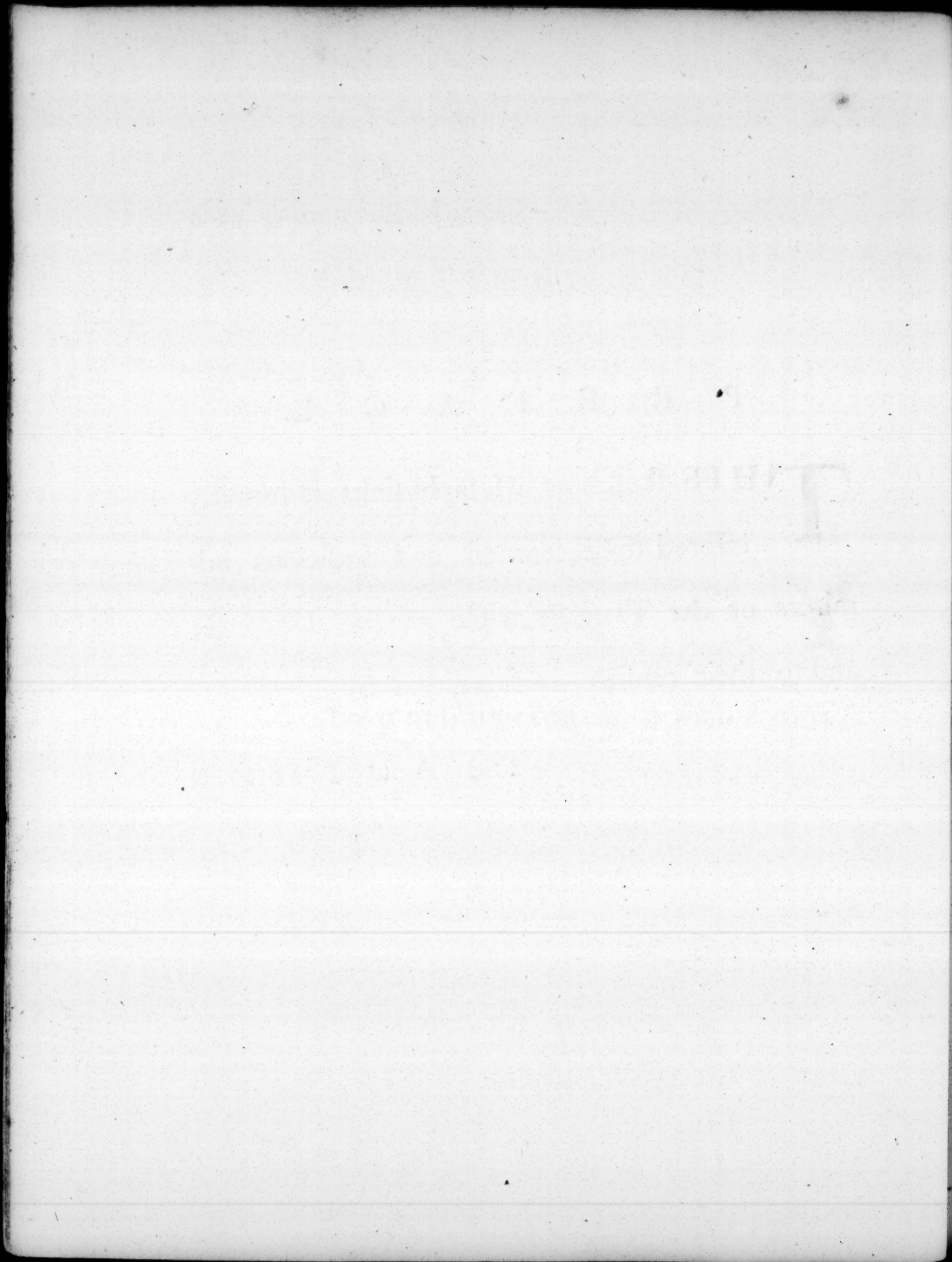
M DCC LXI.



P R E F A C E.

THIS sketch of Metaphysicks is humbly
offered to all learned and judicious ad-
mirers of the True Principle of the Universe,
and to their censure is submitted by

The A U T H O R.



THE VANITY OF
PHILOSOPHICK SYSTEMS.

To the ROYAL SOCIETY.

YE Sons of Science, *Wisdom's* chosen band,
Slow to believe, but quick to understand,
Nature's dark *wildernefs* inur'd to tread
Thro' numerous paths by long experience led,
Leave, for a while, your *magazine* of arts, 5
And try a *doctrine* which the *Muse* imparts.

To but *one point* she asks you to agree.
Grant it *but possible*, and there must be

B

A

A *God*, an universal *moving Mind*,
Pervading all things, yet to none confin'd, 10
By *wisdom* working, with *ideas* fraught,
Who moulded *matter* into *being* brought,
United, under various *forms* display'd,
The *atoms*, fit or to be mov'd, or stay'd.
A lifeless *lump* this *universe* remain'd, 15
Till that enliv'ning *pow'r* to move *ordain'd*;
Sun, Moon, and Stars, conducted in their way,
And Earth unwieldy, ready to obey.
Sole *architect* to such a wond'rous *frame*,
Who first gave *motion*, still maintains the same: 20
Fire immaterial,---*spirit* pure in *air*,
The still small *voice* that whispers ev'ry where ;

Beyond

PHILOSOPHICK SYSTEMS. 7

Beyond *time's* measure, or the bounds of *space*,
He's *All* in all, and *All* in every *place*.

Some certain *bodies* of superior *mould*, 25
With animating *spirits* he ensoul'd,
Not independent, guided, and yet free,
As willing *instruments* to *God's* decree.

FROM God alone all *active* pow'r proceeds,
Ev'n *human* reason his assistance needs. 30
Man may design, direct within his *sphere*,
And yet his *will* is but imperfect there.
God must concur, must operate of course,
Man only knows how to employ the *force*.

No *organist* so skilful e'er was found 35
To make, but only *modulate*, the *sound*.

His *art* may teach him, thro' what *pipes* to know
 The *blast* inspir'd shall musically flow;
 Conscious he wills his fingers where to move;
 His fingers mov'd, that's all, that you can prove. 40

STOP but the *heart*, all vital *functions* cease,
 But can you move, or make *that* mend it's pace.

SEE o'er the *strings* the *fiddler's* fingers run,
 Scarce has he thought on't, when the *tune* is done.

THE *dancer* thus to measure *time* is taught, 45
 So quick his *feet* almost outrun his *thought*!
Art, habit, genius, call it as you please,
 You know not what; 'tis something more than *these*.

To

PHILOSOPHICK SYSTEMS. 9

To say, *Man* acts, not knowing *how*,---is odd,
Leave then the *will* to *Man*, the *work* to *God*. 50

MAN to a *ship* may fitly be compar'd,
Where *tackling* to each *office* is prepar'd;
The *flesh* and *bones* a *hull*, well built with *art*,
Ropes are the *tendons*, and a *sail* the *heart*;
Reason a *rudder* to conduct the whole; 55
The *captain* in the *cabbin* is the *soul*;
The *nervous spirits* are the *crew* on board,
Eager to execute their *captain's* word.
The *ship* thus trim'd, one *signal* makes it fail,
If *Providence* supply the moving *gale*. 60

NOT *man* alone is mov'd by *force* divine,
Alike in *brutes* appears the great design.

Reason and *instinct* differ in degree;

The same that prompts the *man* inspires the *bee*.

The *bird* that builds, an *instrument* (at best) 65

Fancies herself the *author* of the *nest*.

Let *man* and *brute* their utmost efforts try,

Effectual *force* their Maker must supply.

Reason may choose which way its *course* to bend,

Superior *pow'r* must guide it to its *end*: 70

God can accomplish what the mind shall choose,

While *man* foresees th' effect he will produce.

Of *God's prerogative* can *man* partake,

At once unable to destroy, or make?

THE patient *husbandman*, who tills the land, 75

And casts thereon his *bread* with liberal *hand*;

Skilful

Skilful to sow, but not t'increase the *grain*,
With prosperous success shall he be vain!

BEHOLD that *engine* on yon' rising ground,
With sail-like wing it whirls incessant round: 80
Behold beneath within this rapid stream,
A circling *wheel* roll round a weighty beam.
This *emblem* of imaginary power,
This miller's *art* of grinding corn to flower,
It's *master's* pride with it's own weakness shows, 85
Which all it's *force* to *wind* or *water* owes;
Rather, in juster language let us say,
To *him* whose will both *wind* and *tide* obey.
All are but engines in one hand divine,
Some urg'd by force, the rest as they incline: 90

The

The *pen*, and *sword*, compell'd their task fulfil,
The *writer*, and the *warrior*, as they will.

No vital *energy* to *matter's* given,
A passive mass, all actuated from heav'n :
For *laws* of *motion* are but idle things, 95
Unless the *maker* agitate the *springs* :
Bodies are motionless as mere *machines*,
The *operator* hid behind the scenes ;
One single *actor* on this *worldly stage*,
Was, is, and will be *God* from age to age. 100

WHAT envy, *mortal*, in thy bosom lurks,
To flight thy *Maker*, and extol his *works* !
When lofty *forests* fall at *Man's* command,
Boasts the proud *axe* against the *Feller's* hand ?

PHILOSOPHICK SYSTEMS. 13

Truths, that perplex the studious *sophist's* brain, 105

Blind *Fate*, or *Chance*, or *Nature* must explain.

Hence *system*-making into fashion grew,

All causes but the only *one*, they knew :

Tho' in *opinion* seldom they agreed,

Matter to deify they *all* decreed. 110

This *second* CAUSES for their *systems* fram'd,

A *journeyman* to God, and *Nature* nam'd.

FIRST *Strato*, puff'd with philosophick pride,

Motion and *gravity* to *things* apply'd;

Banish'd at length the *Godhead* from his *state*, 115

Useless to govern, needless to create.

BOLD *Epicurus* saw, or feign'd to see,

Discordant atoms in a void agree;

C

Chance

Chance produce *order*, *light* from *darkness* shine,
And *Creatures* justly form'd without *design*. 120

ACUTE *Cartesius* with *mechanick* head,
Plac'd *subtil* matter in it's *Maker's* stead;
Made *brutes* spontaneous move without a *soul*,
And piec'd up one great *clock-work* of the *whole*.

DOGMATICK *Hobbes* with impudence profess'd
To make an *immaterial* *God* a *jest*; 126
Taught *all* is *body*, variously combin'd,
And *spirit*, but the *phantom* of a *mind*.

SAGACIOUS *Newton* last with pond'ring thought,
To *mathematick* rules a *system* wrought; 130
God, as an *eastern* *Monarch*, left for show;
His *viceroy*, *Gravity*, the *God* below.

WHILE

PHILOSOPHICK SYSTEMS. 15

WHILE pious *Malebranche* with devotion fir'd,
A pow'r divine in every act admir'd;
Acknowledg'd none, which others *causes* call, 135
But *God* th' *Efficient*, that moves all in *All*.

SHORT-SIGHTED *scepticks* of inglorious fame,
And *beasts triumphant* I disdain to name;
7 *Minute Philosophers*, a graceless crew, 7 *Berkeley*
Who knew not *God*, and wrote more than they knew.

PROUD *Virtuosi*, vain *conjectures* cease: 141
Tho' right you calculate, yet wrong you guess.
Attraction is no pow'r, but *law* alone;
The *earth* attracts not, nor descends the *stone*;
Those swelling *waves*, that flow at stated *tides*, 145
Are mov'd by *One*, which o'er the *Moon* presides;

Not mutually attracted, as *some* think,
 Who *active* force to sluggish *matter* link.

SEE *Steel* the magnet seek with amorous *chace*,
 With other *metals* shun the like *embrace*, 150

See *straw* uplift to *amber* closely clings,
 Yet scorns to rise to unelectral things.

See *cork*, that on the *water's* surface skims,
 You say, it draws the *cork*, that thither swims.

These all are mov'd, with *motion* not their *own*; 155
 Th' *effect* is manifest, but *how* ---- unknown.

SAY, why should *bodies active* be suppos'd,
 Because their *particles* are so dispos'd?

Say, stupid *matter* executes a *plan*,

And who will think you reason like a *man*? 160

How

How should *that* move in *order* so exact,
Which wants both *pow'r* and *knowledge* how to act?

EV'N in *disorder* is discover'd *skill*.

So when *convulsions* rend the trembling *hill*,
When *cities* totter in confusion tost, 165
And *works* of *time* are in an instant lost,
The *band divine* admiring nations know,
Which gives the *shock*, and guides the destin'd *blow*.
Scourg'd thus by *Heav'n*, a guilty *land* repents,
Yet pays no *homage* to the *instruments*, 170
The same *materials*, diversely employ'd,
Whereby the *world* is nurtur'd, or destroy'd.

MATTER in *motion*, you may understand,
An *instrument* in *one* all-moving *band*;

Not

Not put in motion, and so left to run, 175
 But mov'd continually, as first begun.
 Such *motion* copy'd in a *sphere* you see,
 By *our* late *Archimedes*, *Orrery*.

THIS *only truth experiments declare*,
 A *God*, in whom we live, and move, and are ; 180
 A *mind*, that always acts, a constant *cause*,
 Who thro' a *miracle* must change his *laws*.

MAN, that with *Reason's* eye attentive views,
 Observes the *path*, the *Deity* pursues,
 Marking the *steps* his *wisdom* has outcast, 185
 And so foresees the *future* in the *past*.

THRO'OUT all time, 'tis clearly to be seen
 Who plan'd, preserves, and moves the *whole machine*.

As

PHILOSOPHICK SYSTEMS. 19

As *Anaxagoras* of old withdrew
The veil from Nature, so have we anew 190
Shew'd Motion does a Mind, a *God* proclaim,
And Nature nothing but an empty name.

THUS *magick*, that did once the world bewitch,
Insnare the simple, and the knave enrich,
Unmask'd by learning, and by laws annull'd, 195
The crowd in *ignorance* no longer lull'd,
Wisdom assum'd its antient feat agen,
And *wizards* were no more than common *men*.

DARKNESS must vanish at approach of *light*,
And *Truth*, when seen victorious, strike the *fight* :
Let Reason judge---*vain Systems* are o'erthrown, 201
And *God*, without a rival, reigns alone.

F I N I S.

P W I L O R O P W I C H S E I S T E M S

As a monument of old wisdom

The world from first to last we show

Shew'd Alonzo does a thing or two

And Nature nothing but an empty show

Thus we see that this world is but a show

Like the sun, moon, and the stars above

Mark'd by learning, and by two or three

The world in general is but a show

When all is said its end is but a show

And Nature's work is but a show

Darkness and light are but a show

And Time, when seen with eyes, like the show

Let Reason judge, and let the world be shown

And God, without a rival, reigns alone

